

Message Text

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FM AMEMBASSY ATHENS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 1256

INFO AMEMBASSY ANKARA

AMEMBASSY NICOSIA

C O N F I D E N T I A L ATHENS 5868

EO 11652: GDS

TAGS: SHUM, GR

SUBJ: HUMAN RIGHTS EVALUATION: GREECE

REF: STATE 143267

1. THE EMBASSY CONCURS GENERALLY WITH THE DRAFT EVALUATION ON HUMAN RIGHTS CONTAINED IN REFTEL. HOWEVER, WE HAVE THE FOLLOWING COMMENTS AND SUGGESTED CHANGES IN THE DRAFT:

2. IN THE THIRD PARAGRAPH OF SECTION A(A) THE THIRD LINE SHOULD BE CHANGED TO READ: "INCLUDING MEMBERS OF THE COMMUNIST PARTIES"; AND (B) THE SIXTH LINE SHOULD BE CHANGED TO REFLECT THE RECENT LOWERING OF THE VOTING AGE TO 20 RPT 20 YEARS.

3. THE ANALYSIS OF THE TREATMENT AND THE PROTECTION OF THE TURKISH MINORITY SHOULD BE MADE MORE TENTATIVE REFLECTING OUR SKETCHY INFORMATION ON THIS SUBJECT. WE WOULD SUGGEST THAT THE TWO RELEVANT PARAGRAPHS BE REORGANIZED AND REDRAFTED ALONG THE FOLLOWING LINES:

GREECE IS 98 PERCENT GREEK ORTHODOX. THE LARGEST MINORITY CONSISTS OF ABOUT 125,000 MOSLEMS, MOST OF WHOM ARE OF TURKISH
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EXTRACTION AND RESIDE IN THE VILLAGES OF THRACE IN NORTHEASTERN GREECE.

THE GREEK GOVERNMENT ASSERTS THAT GREECE'S MOSLEMS ARE TREATED EXACTLY LIKE ANY OTHER GREEK CITIZEN. IN SUPPORT OF THEIR CLAIM THAT THEY PROVIDE THE MOSLEM MINORITY ABSOLUTE EQUALITY OF OPPORTUNITY, GREEKS POINT TO THE GROWTH OF THE MOSLEM COMMUNITY IN

GREECE IN THE PAST FIFTY YEARS, TO MOSLEM OWNERSHIP OF VALUABLE AND PRODUCTIVE LAND, TO THE PRESENCE OF TWO MOSLEM DEPUTIES IN THE GREEK PARLIAMENT REPRESENTING MOSLEM CONSTITUENCIES IN THE NORTH, AND TO A RECENT MAYORALTY RACE IN KOMOTINI, A MAJOR CITY OF THRACE, WHICH A MOSLEM CAME VERY CLOSE TO WINNING.

ON THE OTHER HAND, THE MOSLEM MINORITY COMPLAINS ON OCCASION OF OFFICIAL AND UNOFFICIAL HARASSMENT AND MALTREATMENT, COMPLAINTS WHICH ARE ECHOED BY TURKISH GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS AS WELL. THOSE WHO MAKE THIS CASE ARGUE THAT THE MOSLEMS APPEAR LESS AFFLUENT THAN THEIR GREEK NEIGHBORS. THERE ARE ALSO COMPLAINTS AND ALLEGATIONS THAT MOSLEMS ARE IMPEDED FROM BUYING AND SELLING LAND, THAT THEY FACE BUREAUCRATIC DELAYS IN OBTAINING DRIVER'S LICENSES AND BUILDING PERMITS, THAT MOSLEM SCHOOLS ARE OF LOWER QUALITY THAN GREEK SCHOOLS, ETC. (WE HAVE DROPPED THE REFERENCE TO THE SCHOOL AND MOSQUE BURNINGS LAST YEAR BECAUSE SUCH ACTS HAVE BEEN FEW AND ISOLATED.)

4. IN THE LAST PARAGRAPH OF SECTION A, BEFORE THE LAST SENTENCE, ADD THE FOLLOWING: THERE ARE THOSE IN THE GOG WHO WOULD LIKE TO CHANGE THE LAW TO ALLEVIATE THE JEHOVAH'S WITNESSES PROBLEM, BUT THEY ARE STILL A MINORITY.
KUBISCH

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